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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 30 November 1990, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. de MARCO (Malta)

- Question of Palestine [23] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

  (b) Report of the Secretary-General

  Programme of work

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 23 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/45/35)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/709)

Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): The question of Palestine is of profound concern to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that the occupied Palestinian territory and the region as a whole have become nothing more nor less than a powder-keg which could be set off by the slightest spark, setting up a concatenation of explosions whose consequences would be incalculable.

The hope that there would be a dialogue for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, which the Palestinian initiative of November 1988 had revived, has faded. The peace process seems to have reached a dangerous stalemate.

Israel has made no secret of its implacable will to crush the intifadah, which will soon be in its fourth year. Impartial observers have unanimously condemned an alarming trend towards hardening the repression. The Israeli settlers and army are opening fire indiscriminately on defenceless Palestinian civilians, causing death and injury. Thus 1990 will have been punctuated by multiple, tragic incidents, the most serious of which occurred on 8 October, when the Israeli police forces fired, using live ammunition, on unarmed Palestinian civilians in the Haram al-Sharif and other holy places in Jerusalem, leaving over 20 Palestinians dead and over 150 wounded.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Israel is pursuing its policies and practices which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly by beating detainees to the extent of breaking their bones, by expelling Palestinian civilians, and by inflicting collective punishments such as mass arrests, detention, raids on houses and villages, prolonged curfews, confiscation of property, uprooting fruit trees and destroying crops.

The manifest will of the Palestinians to persevere with their intifadah, however, clearly shows that they reject the occupation and that they are resolved to assert their legitimate political rights, including their right to self-determination. Their fierce resistance to the occupation, despite indescribable suffering and sacrifice, commands respect and admiration from all freedom-loving peoples, and receives ever broader support and solidarity.

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(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

It is inconceivable that a people that has been under occupation for decades should be thus abandoned. It is to be feared that the intransigence and excesses of Israel may exacerbate the feelings of frustration and bitterness of the Palestinian people and thereby start a cycle of hatred and violence that would make it even more difficult to bring about a peaceful settlement. It is therefore imperative to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the so-called problems of the Middle East, at the core of which is the question of Palestine.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar reiterates its belief that such a settlement should be based on the following principles: Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem and the other occupied Arab territories; recognition and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the region, including those mentioned in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, and their right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; settlement of the problem of Palestinian refugees, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 as well as other subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling of the Israeli settler colonies in the territories that have been occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to the holy places, religious buildings and sites.

Madagascar reiterates its support for the convening, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as its support for the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to self-determination.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Madagascar likewise supports the repeated appeal of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to the Security Council, in particular to its permanent members, for the Council to consider the steps necessary for the convening of this Conference, including the establishment of a preparatory committee and measures to ensure the safety of all States in the region, as well as the renewal of the mandate given to the Secretary-General so as to enable him to continue his efforts with the parties concerned and in consultation with the Security Council to facilitate the convening of the Conference.

With the climate of understanding which so fortunately seems to prevail at present among the most influential members of the Security Council, there can be no doubt that this appeal will be heeded. Supported by a wide consensus and inspired by the facts, the idea of an international peace conference on the Middle East is indeed remarkable proof of the sense of responsibility of the international community and the fruit of joint efforts to approach a basic problem in a pragmatic way.

In support of our optimism let me quote the following passage from the statement issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council following a meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 28 September 1990:

> "The Ministers expressed their deep concern at the aggravation of tensions in the Near East. They reaffirmed their determination to support an active negotiating process in which all relevant parties would participate, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. They agreed that such negotiations should be based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the

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Security Council and should take into account the right to security for all States in the region, including Israel, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." (S/21835, p. 3)

Two weeks after this statement the Security Council took the opportunity to affirm - for the first time unanimously - its determination to begin to take steps for the protection of the Palestinian people. My delegation would emphasize that in resolution 672 (1990) the Council condemns the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces and also makes an urgent appeal for the exercise of more effective authority on the part of the Israeli Government in protecting persons and communities. However, my delegation deplores the diffidence that was displayed by the Security Council in that resolution in glossing over the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to be taken to Arab-Israeli problems. Furthermore, the resolution does not take account of the legitimate interests of all parties and the human component of the problem. Our impression was confirmed by the adoption - also by unanimity - of resolution 673 (1990) of 24 October 1990, in which the Security Council deplored the refusal of the Israeli Government to receive the mission of the Secretary-General to the region.

The reports of the Secretary-General and the subsequent debates in the Security Council and the Assembly have indicated the desire of the Palestinian people to have the territory that has been occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, placed under the immediate supervision of the United Nations as part of the peace process. An impartial presence, duly set up by the United Nations, might give this long-suffering people at least the feeling of being truly protected.

The Secretary-General has noted (S/21919), inter alia, that an additional number of 36 persons from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the occupied territories contributed to defusing tense situations; this was also true when the presence of the delegation

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of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was reinforced. Finally, in the months following the visit to Israel by the special representative last summer, there was indeed a reduction in the Israeli military presence in the occupied territories as well as in the number of casualties of actions that had been carried out in the territories by Israeli security forces.

Madagascar reiterates its belief that the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is de jure applicable to the territories which Israel has occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. Madagascar supports the idea of convening, if necessary, a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to that Convention so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure its implementation.

In any event, we would insist on the urgent need to create a mechanism that could effectively guarantee the protection of the Palestinian population. The United Nations has responsibilities towards the Palestinians, who are entitled, first of all, to physical safety within the framework of the pertinent legal and political machinery.

Mr. AL ADOUFI (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): It is regrettable that the great interest taken by the international community in several hotbeds of tension in the world, and the resultant political settlements to those situations, have not embraced the question of Palestine though it is one of the oldest questions on the agenda of this Assembly. It is a question of which the General Assembly has been seized since the early years of the United Nations. Moreover, it is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East region.

Without a doubt, it is Israel's policy of intransigence, its rejection of all United Nations resolutions, its breach of the Charter, its trampling of international law and its denial of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination on its national soil that complicate further the Middle East situation and jeopardizes the peace and security of the region and of the whole world because of the policy of aggression pursued by Israel towards the people of Palestine.

The situation is aggravated and complicated, to an extent that threatens the region with a serious explosion, by the growing systematic immigration of Jews to occupied Palestine. While it constitutes a gross violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, this immigration adds to their tragedies, through the displacement and expulsion of thousands of Palestinians and the destruction of their national identity because such immigration grants an illegal right to groups of Jews brought from other States to settle and expand at the expense of the Arab people of Palestine.

This bleak picture of the suffering of the Palestinian people over many years highlights the importance of the discussion by the General Assembly of the most important item on its agenda, namely the question of Palestine. It is all the more important because the question is debated this year at a time when the new climate

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of international relations reflects positively and progressively on international issues and heralds the emergence of a new international order which aims inter alia at resolving peacefully and equitably by political means the world's chronic as well as more recent international issues.

If, in this context, the United Nations has succeeded in achieving political solutions to many of the questions with which the international community was preoccupied for many years, it has thus proved its ability to play its part in settling other international disputes by peaceful means. Foremost among those questions, is the question of the Arab people of Palestine, the creation of a spirit of understanding and confidence among the various peoples and nations of the world, and finding solutions to the other world problems which plague all mankind.

This insistence on the urgent need to find a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine is dictated by the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, the Israeli denial of the most rudimentary rights of the Palestinian people, and the Israeli persistence in resorting daily to the most horrendous methods against the sons of Arab Palestine. Such methods run the gamut of suppression, oppression, imprisonment, torture, expulsion, demolition of homes, appropriation of properties, starvation, deprivation of education, and other brutal methods that run counter to international laws and norms.

It was only natural that, having reached such a degree of despair regarding what the international community, especially the Security Council, could possibly offer, towards upholding its just cause and putting an end to the Israeli occupation of its territory, the Arab Palestinian people should take the steadfast stand which surprised the entire world and declare that its sacrifices for

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Palestinian soil will never stop and that it will never submit to Israeli occupation. By so doing, the Arab Palestinian people made clear its resolve and determination to regain its national rights, foremost among which is its right to return, to self-determination and the establishment of its independent State, and declared that it will continue its struggle to achieve all these objectives under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

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We seize this opportunity to salute from this international rostrum the intifadah of the Arab Palestinian people in the occupied territories as it enters its fourth year. The intifadah affirms to the international community that the firm resolve of the Palestinian people to liberate its territory from Israeli occupation can never be suppressed by the weapons of war and destruction no matter how powerful they may be.

The horrible massacres of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli forces of occupation constitute a blatant breach of international instruments relevant to human rights, international law and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The most recent example is the horrible massacre in the holy sanctuary of the Haram al-Shareef last October which resulted in the killing of 22 Palestinians and the wounding of hundreds of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli soldiers. These massacres prove that there is an urgent need to ensure the protection of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The Palestinian leadership and the Arab States have responded positively to the realities of new international relations by declaring clearly their desire and resolve to achieve a peaceful, just solution to the question of Palestine. The Palestinian leadership proved its serious-mindedness by declaring the establishment of the State of Palestine in 1988 and by expressing its desire to enter into dialogue with a view to safeguarding the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine on the basis of the principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and resolutions and the complete withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. It further expressed its desire to achieve a lasting, just peace through the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation on an equal footing of all parties to the Israeli-Arab conflict including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

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However, Israel's rejection and intransigence have impeded all efforts aimed at peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem. Israel has even stayed outside the framework of international unanimity and disregarded international law which acknowledges the national rights of the Palestinian people.

This Israeli position, which runs counter to international unanimity, has not been faced with any firm measures of deterrence. Rather, Israel's persistence in its aggressive, expansionist policy and to its refusal to yield to the will of the international community, have been strengthened by the unlimited American military, political and economic support it receives which has even included the use of the veto in the Security Council to prevent the denunciation of such Israeli policies, not to speak of preventing the Council from exercising its responsibilities and its authority under the Charter in dealing with Israel.

The developments unfolding in the Arab region have proved to the entire world that the Middle East is a volatile region on the verge of an explosion that would lead to large-scale devastation and could damage the interests of many peoples and nations. This situation will become progressively more serious unless the question of Palestine enjoys appropriate concern on the part of the international community and unless a just political settlement is found - a settlement that would ensure the implementation of the principles provided for in the Charter and lead to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, occupied since 1967.

Thus, the international community must find new means to ensure Israeli compliance with international law and obligations under the Charter.

Mr. TREIKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): First of all, and at the beginning of this brief statement, I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, how much we admire you, the representative of a friendly and neighbourly country, with which Libya enjoys ties of blood and geography. We are happy to see that you are justifying our hopes for your success.

Four decades have elapsed, and we are still studying the question of the Palestinian people and the tragedy of that people. Once more, we meet and speechify. However, no matter how eloquent and moving those speeches are, or how deserving of ridicule they may be at times, they do not hide the fact that this international Organization has failed completely to do justice to the Palestinian people or find a solution to this problem, which becomes more serious from one day to the next and threatens international peace and security. Regardless of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, which fill the filing cabinets, and regardless of the resolutions of the Security Council, nothing has been done. The Israelis have shown nothing but disdain for the resolutions of our international Organization. This disdain has been reflected in the fact that Israel has indulged in a spree o expansion over the past few decades. It has annexed yet more territories from Al-Quds, the capital of Palestine, to the Syrian Golan Heights to the building of more settlements, in an expansionist drive in the Arab occupied territories, in violation of all laws.

This artificial entity, which is built on terrorism and expansion, has persisted in those policies which it has practised since 1947-1948 with impunity. It has continued to occupy the lands of others, annex the lands of others, commit acts of aggression and invasion. It invaded Lebanon and continues to occupy parts of Lebanon's southern territory.

Israeli terrorism has not been confined to the Palestinian people alone. In the case of the Palestinians, it resorted to massacres. Those massacres began with

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Deir Yassin whose "hero" was the terrorist Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel, and continued unabated since then against the Palestinian people to make them leave Palestinian soil. But Israeli terrorism did not stop at that. It extended to other parts of the Arab homeland. Iraq's nuclear reactor, regardless of its peaceful purposes, was bombed. Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, was bombed. The harrassment of the Palestinians, to the point of physical liquidation in various parts of the world, including Europe, continues with impunity.

All those resolutions which we have adopted, mostly by a vast majority, and all those urgent appeals we have made in the hope that they may deter Israel in some way, have had no effect whatever. The forces of Israeli oppression and injustice have pressed on, driving out the Palestinians, demolishing their houses and seizing their land for the building of settlements to receive new settlers. We have heard those who defend all this under the pretext of defending the right to freedom of movement. We support the right of individuals to move from one place to another. But collective emigration is a settler-colonialist migration which flies in the face of every human right, unless we accept that human rights are contingent on the religion of those who are entitled to have such rights and are the preserve of the followers of one religion.

When the Palestinian people call for their right to return, they are denied that right - as it is considered to be against the law. Consequently, the Palestinians are told to go live in other Arab lands, because there is so much Arab land. This is a logic that could have applied to others. For example, when Germany occupied France, it could have told the French: "We Germans now occupy France. So why don't you French accept to go and live in the United States? Why do you insist on defending your land? Why don't you go find yourselves an alternative country to make your home in? This could be said to any other people

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in Europe or elsewhere. It is an unthinkable logic. The Palestinians cannot accept any other territory but their own. It is their right to return. How can we give foreign immigrants the right to settle in Palestine and deny the right to live in Palestine to the Palestinians?

We also talk of the universality of the Organization. When we say that the Israelis have violated the principles of the United Nations Charter and we hear of sanctions that are there, in the Seventh Chapter. We even witness the imposition of those sanctions now, on other countries. So, why don't we apply the same standard?

We are told that this a World Organization and that every people has the right to be represented in it. We accept that. However, we must ask the question: does the Palestinian people have the right to occupy its seat here or does it not? Does the Palestinian people have the right to be represented here, or does it not? We believe that it does, unless we accept that the Palestinian people is not a people and accept that the Organization's universality embraces every people in the world with the single exception of the Palestinian people.

In the past, the world path was dark indeed. It was the path of self-interest. No one, especially those who bear major responsibilities, acted from principle. Quite the contrary. Principles were respected only when they promoted the interests and designs of certain Powers. So, if the Organization is as universal as we claim, the principle of universality should apply to all, on an equal footing and the Palestinian people should be allowed to return to its territory, to establish its State on its national soil and to be represented in this universal Organization, just like any other people on earth.

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Sometimes we feel as if we are crying in the wilderness. However, today it is said that the policy of blocs is a thing of the past. There is a new policy in the world. The world's conscience has awakened. Economic and strategic interests are no longer the driving forces in the international arena. Principles are being upheld. The world is prepared to defend those principles. This new policy gives cause for optimism.

Recently we have seen the Europeans meet in Paris to declare that the cold war is over and that a new era has just begun. This gave us cause for optimism. However, peace should not be the preserve of Europe. All men - white, black or yellow - have a right to peace. Solving the problems of Europe and safeguarding the security of Europe should not be at the expense of the problems of other parts of the world. The Mediterranean region, in particular, has always been tied to Europe. Its security has always been connected with that of Europe. Many raging battles of the First and Second World Wars were fought on the land of the Arab nation. My country was one of the victims of those battles. Therefore, the security of Europe is intimately linked with that of the Arab nation. It is in the interest of both Europe and the Arab nation to work together within the framework of the world community, take the side of right and solve the problem of the Palestinian people. The world cannot enjoy peace unless the Palestinian problem is solved.

It has been agreed to embark on a new policy and to initiate a new phase of disarmament. We welcome this because we need food and medicine much more than we need arms. We in an Arab nation know full well the meaning of war. Libya, for instance, suffered the ravages of a protracted war that lasted for more than 30 years against the Italian fascists. In that war, we lost one half of our

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population. Our land was devastated and our children were orphaned. So we know the meaning of the word "peace". However, peace can never reign in the absence of justice.

There is a lot of talk about peace, about the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. To all this we say, yes of course, we too want to end the arms race in our region, but we do not want that at the expense of the Arab nation. The Israelis are being given everything. They are being given technology. They possess nuclear and chemical weapons, but when an Arab State tries to possess any defensive weapon, it is overwhelmed with accusations.

Although the Israelis have refused to sign any international agreement that would force them to respect international guarantees on nuclear weapons, technology and money are given to them while the Arab nation is denied access to technology. Access to the study of any scientific or technical subject has been made taboo to Arabs, especially the Libyans, by certain countries. There has been and continues to be a veto on technology for the Arabs, in the interest of the Israeli entity.

We are all very much aware of the history of this tragedy. We are all aware of the suffering of the Palestinian people. We are all aware of the dangers posed to the whole region by Israel and its expansionist policy. But, what is the solution? Are we to go on adopting resolutions, as we shall do in a few days time, just to add to the archives of the United Nations? Should we not, instead, assess the situation? Should we not take the matter seriously and avoid the use of double standards? The Security Council has been furnishing us recently with example after example of this use of double standards.

The principle of non-admissibility of occupation and the non-admissibility of the overwhelming of the weaker by the stronger is a principle that we have always upheld. Over the past few months, the Security Council has put it into effect. We

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agree to that. But there should not be a double standard in putting our principles into effect. When the Israelis annexed Al-Quds and the Golan Heights it was not possible to get the Security Council even to condemn those actions. The Security Council did not want to hurt the feelings of the Israelis. Indeed, how could anyone hurt the feelings of God's chosen people? The chosen were promised this land, as if God, as an old sage once remarked, was a real-estate magnate who sat there parcelling off tracts of land to whomever He chose.

We want the recent vigorous stand by the Security Council to be a permanent and consistent policy, not an opportunistic one that is pursued only when it suits certain interests. The steps taken with regard to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait should also be taken with regard to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian lands, the Golan Heights and particularly, Al-Quds. Otherwise, we shall be an Organization that deals in double standards. Chapter VII of the Charter must be applied. That chapter was not written to be applied to just one particular State in one particular case, but to all those who breach the provisions of the Charter. And in the history of the United Nations there has not been a State that has breached the Charter and proved to be a non-peace-loving State more than the Zionist entity.

The Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its children, the young Palestinians who have taken up stones as weapons, mark the awakening of a people which has demonstrated, through its heroic intifadah, regardless of the heavy sacrifices, that it will not stand helpless, but will struggle. History has taught us that whatever is taken by force can be recovered only by force. If we, in this international forum, do not restore rights peacefully, we, as Arabs, shall claim our rights. History proves this. France occupied parts of the Arab homeland and was forced to withdraw. Italy occupied

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parts of the Arab homeland and was forced to withdraw. So did Britain. The Crusades were in Palestine for scores of years but had to pack up and go. The Arab nation survived and will survive.

If the world really wants to see peace and security restored, the means to do so are well known. Resolution of the Middle East conflict can be brought about only through the disarmament of the whole region. We in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya firmly support the proposal of President Mubarek of Egypt to make the Mediterranean a weapon-free zone. But this cannot be achieved through the application of double standards.

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The international community has given its support to the cause of Palestine. Today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow we shall be listening to dozens of speakers who represent the majority of the States of the world. This shows the concern of the international community and its respect for its responsibilities for justice and right. However, if this responsibility only take the form of speechifying and the adoption of resolutions to be consigned to the archives of the United Nations, such support will be futile and those rights will not be restored. Today, when the world has awakened and the policy of détente, we do not want this policy of détente to be pursued at the expense of our Palestinian people and our Arab nation.

Mr. TRINH XUAN LANG (Viet Nam): The search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East has occupied the attention of United Nations since its early years. Over past decades the General Assembly has viewed the question of Palestine as being at the core of the Middle East problem. It has repeatedly stated its position that no just and lasting peace will be achieved in the region without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights and the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of Israel from all the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories.

The Assembly has further affirmed that such a settlement cannot be achieved without the equal participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

It is important to note that dynamic developments have occurred in the course of recent years, especially the proclamation of the State of Palestine and the blessed intifadah of the Palestinian people. These events have made a significant

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contribution to the process conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive, lasting and just solution to the question of Palestine.

The intifadah will soon enter its fourth year but as was stated by the Secretary-General in his annual report on the work of the Organization, issued in September 1990:

"... regrettably, the situation in the occupied territories remains bleak, with little hope of early progress". (A/45/1, p. 10)

The deteriorating and explosive situation in the Middle East results from the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land, including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan, the Gaza Strip and other Arab territories; the persistence of Israel in its aggressive policies and expansionist practices in the region; the policy pursued by Israel in the occupied territories, which continues, as in the past, to be based on the principle that the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 constitute a part of the State of Israel. All this has as its source the policy of annexation and of the establishment of settlements in occupied territories, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the international obligation of Israel as a State Party to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The escalation of violence in the occupied territories was caused by the implementation by the Israeli authorities of a revived "iron-fist" policy. This policy has been illustrated by a number of harsh measures affecting the human rights of the Palestinian population such as an increasing number of arrests and trials leading to the detention of many civilians imprisoned for political or security offences and the imposition of measures of administrative detention.

The recent massacre of 21 Palestinians was condemned by the international community as an act for which the Israeli authorities alone are responsible because of their use of armed force against Palestinian civilians, who are supposed to be

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protected by those authorities in the occupied territories. The refusal by Israel to accept a mission sent by the Secretary-General in accordance with the relevant resolution of the Security Council to look into that massacre and make recommendations for the Security Council to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians constitutes an arrogant challenge from the Israeli authorities to the entire world. That also calls into question the Security Council's credibility and is an obstacle to the Council's due exercise of its functions of maintaining and ensuring international peace and security.

The question of Palestine and that of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole remain to the fore of the international community's attention as one of the most protracted and difficult of all the conflicts after the Second World War.

It is certainly necessary that more should be done to ensure the safety and protection of the civilian population and to help bring about a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. An urgent and concerted effort is required to promote an effective negotiating process and to help create the conditions necessary for it to succeed. In order to break the existing deadlock and to find a political solution to the problem, a constructive, practical and comprehensive approach is required. In this connection my delegation deplores the suspension of the dialogue between the PLO and the United States Administration and sincerely hopes that the dialogue will be resumed so as to further the peace process in the Middle East, which requires the adoption of an impartial stand and recognition of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Viet Nam consistently stands for the following principles endorsed by the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade in September 1989:

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"a) the withdrawal of Israel from all the territory of the State of Palestine, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and from all the other occupied Arab territories;

"b) guaranteeing arrangements for the security of all States in the region, including the State of Palestine, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"c) resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"d) dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and,

"e) guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites". (A/44/551, p. 39)

My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO, on an equal footing, to achieve a just and durable peace in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate at this rostrum the permanent support and brotherly solidarity of the people and Government of Viet Nam with regard to the sacred cause of the heroic Palestinian people. The struggle of the Palestinian brothers and sisters is gaining wide-ranging support in all parts of the world, and therefore is bound eventually to triumph.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Today we are considering the question of Palestine against the backdrop of the situation prevailing in the Middle East, which differs considerably, as far

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as the deployment of forces in the region is concerned, from that position as recently as six months ago. As is aptly pointed out in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,

"The Gulf crisis in the latter part of 1990 has heightened tensions and has brought instability to an already troubled region." (A/45/35, para. 93)

The seizure and subsequent annexation by Iraq of the sovereign State of Kuwait has brought in its wake considerable political and socio-economic changes in the Near East. Masses of people have been relocated; the situation has grown white hot and an extremely difficult position has arisen for the economies of a number of States both in the region and beyond.

All this has been happening in the context of positive changes in contemporary international relations marking the end of the cold-war era and inspiring with the hope that age-old, sometimes extremely difficult, international problems and crises can be resolved. A wave of reform has swept across Europe, Central America and the southern part of Africa. The United Nations has played a noteworthy part in these processes, thus proving the effectiveness and efficacy of the political machinery available to it.

In the spring of this year there seemed to be grounds for cautious optimism regarding a solution to the Palestinian problem, which remains the key to a Middle East settlement. However, today the international community has to admit once again that the resolution of this problem is no nearer. A year ago 151 votes were cast in favour of a speedy political solution to the problem. Such unprecedented unanimity of political will on one of the most complex political problems gave us reason to hope that real progress could be achieved even as early as 1990.

Current events, however, have indicated that the situation in the West Bank of the Jordan, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, is becoming increasingly

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tense. On 8 October, in Jerusalem, the Israeli police opened fire on a group of Palestinians who had met at the Al-Aqsa mosque. More than 20 people perished and dozens were wounded.

The Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 672 (1990), which condemned the acts of violence that had been committed and authorized the Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission to the area. Israel ignored both that resolution and the Security Council's subsequent resolution, resolution 673 (1990), by resorting to new acts of repression in order to put down the intifadah.

Three years have now elapsed since the Palestinian uprising began, an uprising which has irrevocably indicated the unflinching will of this people to regain its freedom, end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian State. No longer can even the most prominent politician in Tel Aviv deny the indisputable fact that the intifadah is an act of peaceful civil disobedience in the face of an armed Israeli soldier or a Jewish settler. To a certain extent this is a protest by mothers, old people, youths and children.

On 24 May of this year, during the hearings on a dialogue between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the United States of America, in the Sub-Committee on European and Near Eastern Affairs of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States, a very characteristic acknowledgement was made by the former Israeli Defence Minister, Itzhak Rabin, when he said the following about the intifadah:

> "Any attempt to equate the intifadah with terrorism is wrong and misleading. The uprising in the territories could be considered terrorism only if the Palestinians were organized in armed terrorist squads equipped with Kalashnikov rifles, hand grenades and explosives, and if the use of these weapons had become the most important element in the activity against us.

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"Stoning and roadblocks account for 85 per cent to 98 per cent of all incidents, and 60 per cent to 65 per cent of the stonings are perpetrated by children below the age of 12."

I do not think that this quotation needs any comment.

In this connection, I should like to dwell on the problem of the violation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory and to refer to certain aspects of the economic situation that has arisen there.

Reports in 1990 from various United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, special committees and observer groups created in various countries, missions that visited the occupied territories, and individual observers leave no shadow of a doubt about the acutely tense situation suffered by the Palestinians. We need only refer, for example, to the report (A/45/576) of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. That report gives an in-depth account of the gross violations of the rights of the Palestinian population and the constant attempts to annex the occupied lands.

The occupying Power's refusal to acknowledge universal human values and the Israeli leadership's refusal to accept the absolute necessity of guaranteeing human rights, or to allow the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination and to establish their own independent State, prevents the just settlement of the Palestinian issue, and thus of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole.

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The gross flouting of human rights in the occupied territories has turned into a widespread system of punitive steps aimed at undermining the very basis for the existence of a Palestinian Arab people as a social, cultural, economic and ethnic community. Here I am referring to mass arrests of those who are dissatisfied with the occupation and the destruction of the houses of Palestinians, confiscation of land, property and water resources for the benefit of the Israeli settlements, relentless militarization of the occupied territories, and the placing of harsh restrictions on entering and leaving the territories. In special camps in the occupied Palestine territories about 60,000 people are under administrative arrest, accused of participating in the intifadah and resisting the occupation.

According to data in the report of the State Department of the United States on human rights practices for the current year, since 1 January 9,130 Palestinians have been languishing in the Defence Force prisons alone - undoubtedly a gross violation of human rights. Palestinians accused of political anti-occupation activity have been deported, and a number of prominent Palestinian public figures have been denied the right to leave.

We cannot overlook another aspect of the humanitarian problems in the occupied territories - that is, the harassment and persecution to which the Muslim and Christian communities are subjected.

All these actions, as we see it, are contrary to international treaties, first and foremost the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the 1907 Fourth Hague Convention and other international legal documents.

Israel has not given up its attempt to annex the occupied territories by building new settlements and extending and consolidating already existing ones, by

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subordinating the Palestinian economy to the needs of the Israeli economy and Israeli security. The development of the infrastructure of the Israeli settlements and their formation into agro-industrial clusters connected by a broad system of roads have caused legitimate concern both among the Palestinians and in the international community.

I have one further point, which is directly connected with the question of the Palestinian territories and the Israeli authorities' plans for them. During the current year the question of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories has become considerably more acute and has taken on new characteristics. I am referring to the problem of the emigration of Jews from the countries of Eastern Europe, primarily from the Soviet Union, and their settlement in those territories.

Here the Ukrainian SSR has a fundamental position, a position of principle. One people's inalienable rights cannot be exercised through the simultaneous infringement of another people's inalienable national rights. I do not think that anyone, apart from Israel, could cast any doubt whatever on that axiom. Nevertheless, the Israeli leadership continues to make very ambiguous statements on this matter. Of course, this does not contribute in any way to the quest for a solution to the Palestinian problem.

The Ukrainian SSR, as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, has frequently had occasion to speak both in the Security Council and at sessions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies in favour of a large step forward being taken speedily towards reaching a Middle East settlement. The uncompromising position of the Government of Israel on the Palestinian issue, its refusal to engage in dialogue

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with the PLO and its attempt to find alternative partners for negotiations simply complicate the situation and represent an extremely dangerous, nay destructive, policy. It is our belief that the most urgent task today is to use opportunities which have not been used in the past, not to allow things to stagnate and, indeed, not to take any retrograde steps in seeking mutually acceptable solutions, to show realism, patience and a genuine desire to go forward from confrontation to taking account of respective legitimate interests and to seek a balance in the interests of everyone.

Therefore, our delegation fully supports the following conclusion reached by the Secretary-General in his report:

> "Given the grave dangers in the region that are evident to all, I cannot reiterate too strongly the need to revive efforts aimed at ensuring a just and lasting settlement of [the] conflict ...". (A/45/709, para. 7)

As far as the United Nations is concerned, we believe that it has in its possession the necessary potential and diplomatic machinery for achieving a just political solution to the Palestinian question guaranteeing the long-suffering people of Palestine their inalienable national rights, including the right to create their own sovereign Palestinian State.

It is perfectly obvious that Israel's maintenance of the status quo in the occupied Palestinian territories is an explosive situation, which could have extremely serious consequences both for the State and the people of Israel itself and beyond the boundaries of that region.

I should like to refer particularly to the opportunities offered by the United Nations and its highest body, the Security Council, for solving the Palestinian question. We should ask ourselves this question: what in practical terms has been

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done by the United Nations and the Security Council in the last year to solve the Palestinian problem? The answer to this question hardly inspires optimism. Throughout the world the Security Council is quite properly regarded as the highest forum, with the responsibility for maintaining peace and security in various parts of the planet - and this is no accident. We have a number of examples, quite recent ones, of the constructive peace-making role played by the Security Council in resolving extremely complex regional conflicts.

On 2 April 1947 it was proposed that the question of Palestine be included on the agenda of the second special session of the General Assembly. That was the first time such a proposal had been made. Since then, four decades have passed. More than one generation of diplomats has had to deal with this extremely difficult and complex issue both within our Organization and outside it. At the same time, today we cannot fail to see that none of the attempts of the Security Council to patiently untie this Gordian knot has thus far proved successful.

For well-known reasons, the Security Council in recent years has essentially been unable to adopt a single practical resolution that could help to eliminate the deadlock on the Palestinian issue. A classical example of this is Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which still exists only on paper and has not been implemented. It appears to us that the Security Council should now take effective steps in the light of the report which the Secretary-General presented pursuant to Security Council resolution 672 (1990). Unfortunately, the possibility of adopting practical resolutions has been blocked by the stubborn reluctance of Israel to fulfil the provisions of Security Council resolution 672 (1990) and 673 (1990) and scrupulously observe all its obligations under the Geneva Convention of 1949.

We appeal to the members of the Security Council to act in accordance with the functions vested in them by the Charter of the United Nations and immediately - in

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any way acceptable to them and ensuring a balance of the interests of all States - take practical steps aimed at speedily convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, on the basis of Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Speaking this morning from this rostrum, the representative of Israel stated optimistically that the positive changes occurring in the world today demonstrate that mankind can gain everything, even peace in the Middle East. I should like to believe that the Government of Israel, not only verbally but through its actions, will finally prove the sincerity of its aspiration to peace. The time is now ripe for action, and events in the occupied territories are further evidence of this. Our common task is to give peace a chance in the Middle East and make it a reality of the present day.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): The year 1990 has indeed been a discouraging one in terms of progress towards resolving the question of Palestine. The momentum towards a solution that had been generated in recent years seems to have dissipated entirely. We recall the mood of cautious optimism that prevailed in the wake of the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers in 1988, exactly two years ago this month, when it seemed that significant progress towards peace was about to be made. That optimism was strengthened at the General Assembly meeting held in Geneva later that year, when Chairman Arafat clearly affirmed the commitment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to work towards a peaceful solution.

Last year, 1989, we witnessed serious efforts by the parties concerned to initiate a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. The Government of Japan was hopeful that such efforts would serve as a first step towards a comprehensive settlement. But then our hopes were dashed when, at the beginning of this year, violence erupted in the West Bank and Gaza as a result of demographic changes taking place there in the light of Israel's settlements policy.

So the intifadah, now in its fourth year, continues as a potent expression of the rage and frustration of the Palestinian people, whose economic and social rights, as well as their national aspirations, have been denied for more than four decades. In particular, Japan deplored the massacre of Palestinians by an Israeli civilian in Rishon Lezion on 20 May and condemned the excessive use of force by Israeli authorities in reaction to the subsequent demonstration of outrage by the Palestinian people. Japan also condemned the actions of the Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem on the morning of 8 October, which resulted in a score of Palestinian casualties.

At present the chasm of hatred and mistrust between the Israelis and the Palestinians is so great that one sees little hope of bridging it. Israel's right to exist must be duly recognized; its legitimate security requirements must be

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taken fully into account. But at the same time Israel should be aware that until the Palestinian people's aspirations are fulfilled the intifadah will continue with undiminished fervour, a situation which only jeopardizes Israel's safety and security.

In no circumstances can the permanent occupation by one nation of the territory of another be justified. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are Palestinian, not Israeli, territories. It is absolutely essential that Israel enter into serious negotiations with the Palestinian people to resolve this explosive situation.

Japan has long insisted that a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine can be achieved only through a process of negotiations between the parties concerned. A prerequisite for any negotiating process is the establishment of common ground between the parties. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and Israel's recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination provide that important common ground. It is my Government's view that the Palestine Liberation Organization represents the Palestinian people; it is essential that Israel and the PLO recognize each other's position and that the PLO participate in the peace process. Indeed, any attempt to achieve an enduring peace through negotiations will be meaningless if the PLO is not involved in the process.

At the same time, Japan would like to see the PLO continue its efforts, with patience and perseverance, to achieve real and substantive progress in the peace process. The PLO should honour its acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), its recognition of Israel's right to exist and its renunciation of all forms of terrorism. In other words, it is important for the PLO to demonstrate by concrete deeds that it is a responsible organization.

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Japan would also welcome the resumption of dialogue between the United States and the PLO at an early date.

The problem is exceedingly complex and it will not be possible to settle all aspects of it simultaneously, at a single stroke. Rather, Japan urges the parties concerned to resume their efforts and address the various aspects one by one. For its part, my Government is ready to support all serious efforts to initiate a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. If, however, the parties concerned fail to do so, they should seriously consider convening an international conference to provide a framework for negotiations. Japan would fully support such a conference.

Until a comprehensive settlement is achieved, the safety of the Palestinian people will remain a subject of concern. The Government of Japan has repeatedly expressed the view that Israel, as the occupying Power, must bear the responsibility for protecting the civilian population in the occupied territories.

Let me make it clear once again that every State has obligations under international law and that it is Israel's obligation to comply with the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Furthermore, the violation of the premises of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the detention of its personnel by the Israeli authorities is indefensible. My Government urges Israel to refrain from any action that might disrupt UNRWA's important work.

Japan believes that concrete steps should be taken to secure the protection of the Palestinian people and therefore endorses the idea, as put forward by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council (S/21919 and Corr.1), of convening a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to discuss possible measures to be taken under the Convention.

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Since Israel has so far failed to ensure the safety of the Palestinian people, it should attend that meeting and co-operate with others to find ways and means of fulfilling its obligations as an occupying Power. Japan believes also that UNRWA's role in protecting the Palestinian people is absolutely crucial, and my country has been extending substantial support for the Agency's activities in the region.

In closing, I should like to affirm that Japan supports all international endeavours for the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. My Government will spare no effort to attain our common goal, which is an early and peaceful solution of the question of Palestine.

Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana): On behalf of my delegation, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the very arduous office of President of the General Assembly for the current session. We are convinced that, as a result of your leadership and work, the Assembly is being steered firmly to a fruitful conclusion.

The General Assembly's consideration of the important question of Palestine this year could not have taken place at a more propitious time. With the present encouraging trend towards conflict resolution through negotiations, it is a matter of deep regret that the situation in the occupied Arab territories continues to be characterized by increased tensions, violence and bloodshed as the prospects for a credible peace process recede.

Eighteen months ago the international community was suddenly awakened by reports of an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue that would prepare the ground for elections in the occupied territories. We in the Ghana delegation, however, received those reports with some scepticism. In our view, the idea of holding elections in the context of the existing state of seige in the occupied territories is unrealistic. Events since then have vindicated this perception. To date, all

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efforts to organize the so-called dialogue have ground to a halt. Hard-line conditions, set by the Israeli authorities, under which the elections would be conducted, have left even those who welcomed the reports wondering whether the election proposals should have been taken seriously, even at the time they were made.

The conditions are that no election will be held until the intifadah ends; that Arabs in East Jerusalem will not be permitted to take part; that Jewish settlements will continue to be built; that Israel will not agree to give up any land; and that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) will not be permitted to participate in the dialogue.

Undaunted, the PLO and its Arab friends, however, continued to extend the olive-branch to their Jewish neighbours, as was demonstrated by the Palestinian peace initiative that was offered in Geneva in December 1988 at the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. The opportunities for peace, sadly, were allowed to be frittered away. According to reports, even the short-lived talks with the PLO that commenced in Tunis were devoted exclusively to terrorism and took no account of practical steps to deal with the Palestinian-Israeli problem.

Under the circumstances the heightened expectations generated as a result of the welcome political developments in Geneva were eroded owing to bitterness, frustrations and the unrestrained use of power in the Palestinian territories.

Country reports on human-rights practices for 1989 published by the United States Department of State and reproduced, in document A/45/175 of 27 March 1990, by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People provide a frightening catalogue of atrocities and the wanton abuse of the rights of the Palestinians. These include the killing of several Palestinians, children among them, in intifadah-related violence, widespread

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arrests, detentions, raids on homes, deportations, imprisonment, and inhuman and degrading treatment of Palestinians, involving excessive force - all in flagrant disregard of the 1949 Geneva Convention. Document A/45/672 of 26 October 1990, which is now before the General Assembly, also confirms these atrocities.

Surely a State like Israel, which claims regularly and consistently that it is the only democracy in a region remarkable for its variety of Governments, cannot permit itself to be charged with some of the most unacceptable violations of the general humane norms in its treatment of the peoples whose territories it currently occupies.

The tragedy is that the Israeli authorities continue to look upon these uprisings as issues of the maintenance of law and order and have therefore resorted to iron-fist measures to deal with them.

But it must be recognized that these uprisings are legitimate outbursts of accumulated Palestinian grievances and consequent despair. They are revolts against the continued denial of fundamental human rights to the Palestinians. Partial and unilateral measures, or even studied indifference and worse, which do not address the root causes of these grievances will not, therefore, succeed.

Ghana considers Israel's occupation of the Arab territories to be governed by the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. We therefore reject totally all claims contrary to the obligations under the Geneva Convention. Our position remains that, so long as Israel continues to occupy these territories as the direct outcome of war, its conduct and administration will be judged in terms of legal and moral obligations that flow from the 1949 Geneva Convention.

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The Palestinian situation calls for an urgent solution. It is clear from the list of human-rights abuses in the occupied territories - in particular, the recent tragic shooting of 21 Palestinians on 8 October at the Al Aqsa Mosque and the regretable impasse over the dispatch of an independent investigation team to the occupied territories pursuant to Security Council resolution 672 (1990) of 12 October 1990 - that the Palestinian question can no longer be left to unilateral action.

The whole complex of issues in that part of the world, which have come to be called the Middle East problem, have transformed the area into the most explosive region in the world today. Long-festering hatred and mistrust over the years have been aggravated by the senseless accumulation of the most sophisticated weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. In the light of the ongoing events in the Gulf it has become even more urgent that we all work together to find a lasting and durable solution to this problem. That is why in an earlier statement we stressed that treating the present Gulf crisis outside the context of the entire Middle East question is short-sighted. Arab resentment cannot be assuaged by a single, even a very spectacular, resolution of the dismal invasion that Saddam Hussein has visited upon the sovereign State of Kuwait. Those who have given themselves - sometimes correctly - the moral right to resolve the present crisis must equally be willing to muster the will to find a lasting solution to the entire Middle East crisis, of which Iraqi aggression is only a symptom, not a cause.

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Indeed, we must redouble our efforts to realize the vision of Jews and Palestinians living together as peaceful neighbours in trade and human contacts, as conceived in General Assembly resolution 181 (II), adopted 43 years ago today, on 29 November 1947. We must persuade the State of Israel that it is in its best interest, in the final analysis, to seek peace. The world community must guarantee that it will be a peace with honour and justice for all.

With the end of the cold war, and given the emerging spirit of co-operation in the United Nations in dealing with intractable regional conflicts, abundant opportunities now exist for resolution of the Palestinian problem through the adoption of realistic attitudes free of any narrow domestic-policy preoccupations. Let us put old fears to rest in the sure knowledge that the very times in which we live will provide an adequate bulwark against cruel and inhuman treatment of one people by another.

We as Africans know this only too well. That is why, in our infinite humanity, we have borne no eternal grudges against those who subjected our humanity to abuse for many centuries. The very fact that Jews suffered grave injustices in the past imposes on the State of Israel the enormous moral responsibility of not being even vaguely suspected of visiting the same crimes on the Palestinian people or any other people.

Ghana continues to support the convening of an international conference on the Middle East; we see this as the only plausible way of dealing with this nagging problem. The apparent shift in United States policy on Soviet involvement in the Middle East peace process, made evident in the recent Bush-Gorbachev joint statement in Helsinki, is a welcome development which must be built upon. In this connection, the conclusion of the Secretary-General contained in the report to which I have referred, that

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"lasting peace will come to the Middle East only when the principles of international law govern the relations between States, when disputes are resolved through peaceful means, when the aspirations of those deprived of their rights have been fulfilled, and regional security and economic arrangements - which take into account the concerns of all the parties in the area - have been established" (A/45/1, p. 10)

is sobering yet hopeful, and gives us all food for thought, and should be reflected on by all of us, especially those directly involved in the disputes we have come to characterize as the Palestinian question.

The Palestinian problem imposes a heavy moral duty on the international community to find a fair and lasting solution to it and to guarantee adequate safety and protection for the Palestinians in the occupied territories. With the recent agreements on intractable regional conflicts - in particular, the proliferation of resolutions on the events in the Gulf - we continue to hope that the same zeal and commitment will be applied in adopting concerted international action that can address the Palestinian problem firmly and fairly.

This is even more pressing now in the light of resolution 678 (1990) on the Gulf crisis, adopted yesterday by the Security Council. Let us hope and believe that Iraq will heed the terrible import of this resolution and pave the way towards resolving all the problems in the Middle East once and for all.

Mr. GAMBARI (Nigeria): As the United Nations confronts one of the remaining residual problems of our time, that is, the question of Palestine, there are ongoing changes in the ideological and political landscape of our world. This is reflected in the process of strengthening international co-operation and the growing recourse to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. New alliances and new friendships based on new realities are emerging. In the process, the rights of

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peoples, including the right to self-determination, have received deserved emphasis. A search for accommodation and coexistence in the true spirit of interdependence has been accompanied by attempts by nations to adapt institutions to reflect and foster the new spirit of freedom.

In Eastern Europe, the strong affirmation of these rights has heralded the dawn of a new era. In Africa, the people of Namibia can now pursue their activities in freedom and dignity. Even in racist South Africa, the long-abused black-African majority population is beginning to witness the process that could lead to the restoration of its rights and dignity, thanks to the initiative of the African National Congress, soon to lead to the commencement of substantive negotiations towards the abolition of apartheid. It is this same tidal wave of history which has made the drum beat of war and violence recede in other parts of the globe.

When Nigeria unreservedly supported resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, we did not have any illusion as to the enormousness of the challenges in moving the Palestinian issues to centre stage of international concern. Our expectation then was that, in the spirit of the times, a similar transformation would be witnessed in the Middle East. Events since then, and in particular Israeli policies and practices, have proved how difficult a lasting solution can be in the absence of the requisite political will, mutual trust and confidence. It is therefore with great disquiet that the Nigerian delegation joins in the debate this year on the question of Palestine. The world must not show fatigue in considering this question; peace and freedom are far too important for that.

The source of our concern, however, is threefold: first, the perpetuation of the Israeli hold on the illegally occupied Arab lands; secondly, the violation

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of the Palestinians' rights, the intensification of the persecution and deprivation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories; and, thirdly, the lack of progress in the search for a solution to the Middle East conflict.

Nigeria is concerned that the policy of force and illegal annexation and occupation of Arab lands seized following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war has proceeded with scant regard to the protestations of the international community, including the outright rejection of that act as null and void. A policy based on the forcible acquisition of territory is anathema, and will always be condemned by Nigeria.

In this connection, the Nigerian delegation once again wishes to recall General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which accepted a two-State solution to the Middle East conflict. That resolution, reaffirmed in subsequent years with ever-increasing majorities, provides, with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the basis for a lasting solution.

As we have stated several times in the past, the question of Palestine remains at the centre of a durable solution. Any durable peace would have to address the problem in all its ramifications. The forced and illegal annexation and occupation of Arab lands, the deportation of Palestinians and the demolition of Palestinian homes - in short, a policy based on force - will not work. Nor will an approach that spurns the good will of the other side, of the Palestinian people, as expressed in the landmark decision of November 1988 by the Palestinian National Council and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

It is indeed ironic that the State whose forebears were so unjustifiably wronged, and bore the brunt of the most outrageous crimes in the annals of human history, should indeed be in the court of public opinion for atrocities perpetrated against the Palestinian people. Israeli treatment of the Palestinians, which

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earned it the opprobrium of this Assembly in 1989, has continued unabated, and is reflected in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

However this does not fully capture in graphic terms the actual sufferings inflicted on the Palestinians as given in the printed and the electronic media. It is worrisome enough that these crimes are being perpetrated in clear violation of international norms and law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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It is depressing that the victims include some of the most vulnerable segments of the Palestinian society, largely women and children. We therefore appeal strongly to the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility by protecting these people. Moreover, there is an urgent need to address the serious social and humanitarian problems created for these people if normalcy is to return.

Nigeria will be willing to assist in addressing these problems. However, we remain convinced that such solutions would at best be mere palliatives unless the fundamental issue of providing a homeland for the Palestinian people were confronted. For, in our view, the rights of the Palestinian people remain central to the search for a comprehensive and durable solution to the Middle East conflict. The rights of the Palestinians can continue to be ignored or smothered under some geopolitical considerations only at the risk of the peace and stability of the region.

Careful and deliberate steps need to be taken to remove suspicions and engender trust and confidence. In this connection, a more forthcoming Israeli reaction to the Palestinian overtures concerning a solution addressing the legitimate aspirations and apprehensions of Israel on the security of its borders should provide a window of opportunity that could be exploited to reach a settlement. Israel would have to withdraw from southern Lebanon and enable that tragic country to be rebuilt from the ruins of its past. Transparent confidence-building measures would have to be initiated to enhance the prospects and success of negotiations in an international conference.

A role by the United Nations in any peace process in the Middle East is a necessity. We notice from the report of the Secretary-General that sufficient agreement does not yet exist among members of the Security Council for the convening of such a conference. It is the hope of the Nigerian delegation that the

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concerns we have already expressed on the plight of the Palestinian people will indeed be translated into concrete measures that will finally move the matter out of the dead centre. We are confident that the United Nations has the appropriate machinery to play such a role, and we urge members of the Council to act on this issue.

As we enter the last decade of this century and prepare to celebrate a new millennium of peace, the international community can ill afford to allow the Palestinian issue to continue to hang over it like an albatross, an undesirable reminder of an unfinished agenda in the defence of a people's right to self-determination.

The peace and stability of our world demand that bold, imaginative action be taken with urgency to liberate the region of the Middle East from the consequences of past policy mistakes, missed opportunities and frustrated hopes, and from the cauldron of war and violence. It is truly time to ensure for the Palestinians the right that other members of the Assembly take for granted: the right to a home that they can call their very own. The Palestinians, by their suffering and forebearance, have long proved, if proof be necessary, that they deserve to be represented here as dignified members of the international community. The United Nations, with its time-tested machinery, is eminently suited to bring this about. The Nigerian delegation hopes that Palestinian aspirations will indeed be fulfilled, even at this late hour, and certainly in this decade.

Mr. GHEGAL (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): First of all, Mr. President, permit me once again to extend to you our gratitude for and admiration of the way in which you have been conducting the proceedings of the General Assembly at this session. Your well-known talents, your experience and the friendly relations of understanding between Malta and Tunisia, as was shown by your

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recent successful visit to Tunisia, give us every hope for the success of this session.

As in previous years, the General Assembly meets as it has been meeting for decades, to discuss the Palestinian question. We cannot but point out that the efforts of the United Nations have not led, so far, to a just and lasting solution that would restore law, peace and security to the Middle East. Though the international community, especially from the rostrum of the General Assembly, has made clear its views on this question, the posture of absolute rejection and intransigence adopted by Israel in its pursuance of the logic of might and domination has obstructed the settlement of this question in accordance with international legality.

If we closely examine the events that have been taking place and the development of the situation and objectively assess the long-standing as well as the emerging trends, it shall be quite clear to any objective observer that the Israeli posture can only be shown graphically as a constantly rising curve of violence, expansion and contempt for the international community's will as embodied in the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on the other hand, has demonstrated that it is sincerely and earnestly determined to reach a just and lasting solution by peaceful means in order to restore peace, security and stability in the whole region. However, the recent events which followed upon the heels of one another have deprived the international community of a number of opportunities which could have led to progress towards a lasting and just peace in the region. As soon as any initiative that may lead to a peaceful solution appears on the horizon, Israel hastens in the opposite direction and does its utmost to thwart such efforts either by manoeuvring or by delaying tactics, procrastinating

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so as to gain time at the expense of the Palestinian people, which is thus deprived of its rights.

Israel has put into effect its plans for expansion, avowed with such cynicism by the Israeli leaders themselves, who have no hesitation in stating that Israel should expand from the Mediterranean to the Jordan and that it should be ready to welcome a new influx of immigrants and settle them in the occupied Arab territories.

These statements of the Israeli leaders show their intentions for what they really are and expose their defiance of the embodiments of international legality: namely, the General Assembly and the Security Council. So long as Israel continues to base its policies on violence and expansion, the natural result can only be an increased tendency towards repression and domination in dealing with the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories and a rejection of international legality, whose aim is to put an end to the current situation through a solution that would restore the rights of the victimized Palestinian people and restore peace to the Middle East.

We are not levelling accusations at random. Recent events have shown how grave the situation is and how much suffering the Palestinians bear at the hands of the Israelis with their practices of repression, brutalization and expulsion. The extreme concern shown by the international community at the tragic events of Al-Aqsa Mosque speaks for itself.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

We sincerely hope that the Security Council will fully measure up to its responsibilities in this respect.

Daily, we see killings and woundings, profanation of holy places, aggression against believers in the house of God and the trampling with impunity of holy values. Indeed, as is their wont, the forces of occupation stood by those who committed those offences and tried to distort the facts by making groundless allegations and by resorting to manoeuvres aimed at exonerating the culprits and blaming the victims. Otherwise, why should Israel refuse to receive the United Nations mission of inquiry? The only plausible explanation is that the refusal to receive the mission stemmed from the awareness of the Israeli authorities that their version of the "truth" is so false that it would not bear scrutiny.

The Al-Quds events, for all their horrendous nature and terrible consequences, are but one more episode in the series of the acts of repression and mass murder of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories by the forces of occupation with the aim of intimidating them and forcing them to knuckle under and accept the usurpation of their land for the absorption of an influx of Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and providing those immigrants with the necessary living space at the expense of the Arab inhabitants, in implementation of a horrific scheme based on the logic of terror and force.

That is entirely contrary to the resolutions of this Organization and of various international conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Indeed, neither international law nor the hallowed precepts of the monotheistic religions have prevented the Israelis from escalating their violence. The plan is clear, and it is being actively and enthusiastically put into effect. It is contrary to every peace initiative that may have any chance of putting an end to the present situation and giving impetus to the peace process.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

There can be no doubt that the creation of crises of all kinds, the heightening of tension and escalation of violence, are bare-faced manoeuvres whose aim is to gain time, face the world with a fait accompli, and feed the greed of the Israeli occupier to the acquisition of more Arab land. Such manoeuvres are not conducive to the creation of a climate that would promote peace initiatives.

It is quite clear that Israel is trying to exploit the Gulf crisis for its own purposes. Its aim is to exploit the events in regions to make gains at the expense of the Arab's fundamental cause, namely the Palestinian question.

However, the peace-loving, justice-loving States which have been trying for decades to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people and rid that people of the injustice that has plagued it for too long, are quite aware of the realities of the situation, and know full well that they must persist in their efforts to protect the Palestinian people in the occupied territories from the dangers that threaten its very existence. The immediate goal is to ensure that international conventions will be respected. At the same time, those States are intent on moving the peace process by calling for the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The major transformations now taking place in the international arena as a result of the prevailing climate of détente have created the appropriate climate for the imposition of respect for international legality in dealing with questions before this international Organization. In order for this state of affairs to become comprehensive, effective and credible, it should apply to all. That is why the question of Palestine should be solved rapidly on the basis of respect for law and international legality. It is unthinkable that we should allow the current situation to continue. It is, in reality, a situation of naked defiance of the

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

resolutions of the international community and flagrant violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories.

Even a cursory reading of the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories in document A/45/576 of 19 October 1990 and the reports in document A/45/84 of 26 January 1990 and A/45/306 of 12 June 1990 circulated to the General Assembly, will show that without a doubt there is a series of flagrant violations of human rights. There is no doubt that the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories has done admirable, responsible and objective work. Its report has shown the gravity of the situation and the threat it poses to the very existence of the Palestinian people, who are groaning under brutal Israeli occupation. The many violations of human rights have become the daily lot of the Palestinian people. They are all part of a frightful plan aimed at the physical elimination of that people and at breaking their will.

For decades now, the Palestinian people have won the esteem and admiration of the world by their steadfastness, determination, fighting spirit and resistance to the aggressor. This has lasted for generations. The ongoing intifadah of the Palestinian people is but a continuation of this heroic resistance. By its determination to continue its intifadah, the Palestinian people has made clear to the whole world that its march to freedom and the creation of its independent State on its territory is irreversible. By its sacrifices, by the blood it has shed, it has shown that it has earned its liberty like other peoples, and that it is determined to win its right to self-determination by its own efforts.

The intifadah has transformed the historic confrontation between the Zionist settler-colonialist enterprise and the Palestinian liberation struggle and

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

initiated a new phase of the conflict. At present, the conflict has been given an impetus and a context that transferred the confrontation from the outer boundaries and peripheries to the heartland of the Palestinian territory which is the object of the conflict.

The Palestinian leadership has issued an earnest and sincere invitation to search for a just and lasting peace.

By taking that responsible and courageous stand, the Palestinian leadership has demonstrated its full awareness and deep conviction that struggle continues to be the legitimate means of protecting and defending the legitimate rights of peoples whenever it becomes impossible to resolve any such situation by the usual peaceful means.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

It is regrettable, however, that this responsible position has not elicited a response from the Israeli Government. It is as if the Israeli Government fears peace and considers that it would jeopardize its expansionist plans and impede the realization of the intentions avowed by the Israeli régime and discussed openly in the Israeli media.

In view of this unnatural situation, the international community is duty bound, more than ever before, to firmly oppose any deviation that may abort the search for peace in the Middle East. The international community is called upon to take practical and effective measures to protect the Palestinian people from the dangers that threaten it and set the peace process in motion as soon as possible.

The United Nations is the embodiment of international legality and the world's conscience. As such, it bears a historic responsibility vis-à-vis this question, and is called upon to act decisively and give impetus to the process of peace in the region.

Tunisia, which has always been on the side of justice, freedom and the right of peoples to self-determination, will continue to support the Palestinian people and its leaders in their rightful struggle to regain their national rights and establish their independent State on their own soil. Tunisia will continue to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and will support every effort and initiative that aims at achieving a just comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East.

By so doing, Tunisia remains true to the unshakeable principles of its foreign policy and fully committed to the principles of the Tunisian transformation of 7 November and the ideals and values enshrined in the United Nations Charter relating to peoples' aspirations for a life of freedom and human dignity.

((Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

This was confirmed by the Tunisian President, Mr. Zein al-Abedine Ben-Ali, in his letter to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, wherein he said:

"Tunisia, which believes in the values of justice and peace and principles of international legality, reiterates its appeal to the international community as a whole for it to make every effort to pave the way to set in motion the peace process in the Middle East. We are firmly convinced that the Palestinian people, with the support of the international community, will regain its rights and freedoms, through its sacrifices, its steadfastness and responsible position, and its heroic and just struggle under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and authentic, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people".

Mr. HASBI (Morocco) (interpretation from Arabic): At the outset, my delegation would like to extend its most sincere thanks to Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, the Permanent Representative of Senegal and Chairperson of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to the members of the Committee for the important report submitted to the General Assembly this year which was, as in previous sessions, objective and precise. My delegation takes great pleasure also in expressing deep appreciation for the efforts being made by the Committee in order to promote the chances of reaching a permanent, just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The General Assembly is considering the question of Palestine at a time in which the world is witnessing positive and important developments which have provided great possibilities to resolve regional conflicts and crises peacefully.

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

However, we would have liked to see the Palestinian question benefit from these developments so that the Palestinian people may, like other people, exercise their right to self-determination and so that we may close a chapter of pain after more than 40 years.

However, the painful reality of the occupied Palestine territories and the tragedies experienced by the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli authorities, most regrettably, force us to admit that the new international atmosphere has not had a positive effect on the Palestinian question.

The Secretary-General succinctly described this situation in his annual report to the General Assembly as follows:

> "It is disappointing to note that an impasse has been reached in the effort to promote a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. The Intifadah will soon enter its fourth year and, regrettably, the situation in the occupied territories remains bleak, with little hope of early progress."
>
> (A/45/1, p. 10)

Over the past few months, the situation in the occupied Palestine territories has experienced a very serious deterioration at every humanitarian and political level, due to the intransigence of Israel and its categorical refusal to respect international resolutions and its persistence in atttempting to obliterate the Palestinian people.

At the political level, all initiatives have been deadlocked due to the policy of Israel which is designed to abort any move that may put an end to the occupation and enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights and establish their State.

In the context of this strategy, Israel escalated its arbitrary practices against the unarmed Palestinian people in order to put an end to their blessed

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

intifadah. It also expanded its policy of settlement by ensuring the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and East European countries to replace the Palestinian people. The aim is clear. The aim is to alter the demographic composition of the occupied territories.

The arbitrary practices against the Palestinian people affect the Palestinians as individuals and affect their daily lives. Those practices which include massacres, torture, mass arrests and the closing of social, medical and educational institutions have become a daily feature of life in the Arab territories under Israeli occupation.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People records many examples of these inhuman Israeli practices.

The last massacre perpetrated by Israel on 8 October in Al-Quds is a telling example of Israel's determination to run up and down the gamut of the inhuman means that would terrorize the Palestinian people who defend their freedoms and sacred places.

The denunciation by the international community of this terrible massacre in which more than 20 Palestinians were killed and a large number wounded, demonstrates the world's adherence to the international resolutions, especially those which regard Al-Quds as occupied territory. The Security Council thus met and adopted resolution 672 (1990) on 12 October 1990, which condemned the acts of violence committed by Israel and re-emphasized its resolutions on Al-Quds, in particular resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980), and the need to apply the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds.

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

At the level of the Muslim world, the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held an emergency meeting in Rabat on 15 October at the request of its Chairman, His Excellency King Hassan II of Morocco, during which meeting it adopted a statement calling upon the world, on behalf of the Muslim world, to take immediate measures to put an end to these massacres and inhuman practices perpetrated by the Israeli authorities and to take practical measures to protect the unarmed Palestinian people.

It is really painful to see that the holy city of Al-Quds, which is revered by the three monotheistic religions, has been transformed by the rulers of Israel from a land of peace and a symbol of tolerance and dialogue into a hotbed of conflict and confrontation, due to their determination to have exclusive dominion over that city and obliterate its Muslim and Christian features.

The declaration by the rulers of Israel that Al-Quds is the capital of their State poses a challenge, not only to the Arabs, but also to all adherents of the Muslim and Christian religions. In this connection, I have the honour to quote a paragraph from the introductory statement of His Excellency King Hassan II in the emergency meeting held in Rabat on 6 April:

> "We say that Al-Quds is the city where three religions co-exist side by side. Is it not the city in which all the sons of Abraham, peace be upon him, live or used to live in brotherly peace? Do not those who dominate Al-Quds today want to have exclusive dominion over it, and thus exclude the adherents of the other two religions".

The Israeli policy of settlements has taken a most serious turn this year due to the mass emigration of the Jews from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to Israel. The recent declarations and measures adopted by the rulers of Israel confirm that this exercise is far removed from respect for the human right to

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movement. On the contrary, it is intended to achieve the objective of the establishment of greater Israel. In the face of these inhuman Israeli practices, Morocco reaffirms all that could and should ensure application of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the occupied Palestinian territories, including the holy city of Al-Quds. The discharge by the High Contracting Parties of their responsibility in this connection would provide one of the legal means to ensure that Israel abides by its obligations to that end. Therefore, Morocco supports the idea of convening a conference to study the effective measures that would ensure protection for the civilians inside the occupied Palestinian territories. The Security Council also should shoulder its responsibilities in order to ensure this protection and take practical measures to implement its previous resolutions in this regard, the latest of which was resolution 672 (1990).

Based on its belief and the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and out of its keen desire to establish a just peace in the Middle East, Morocco has made considerable efforts over the past three decades to look for a durable, just settlement of the Palestinian question and to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all. Morocco sponsored the historic Arab summit in Fez in 1982, which worked out a practical Arab plan to solve the Palestinian question, which was commended by the international community as a whole. Then came the historic Palestinian initiative in Algiers in 1988 that demonstrated the keenness of the Palestinian people and their representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to reach a peaceful solution. The extraordinary Arab summit in Casablanca in 1989 confirmed the commitment of the Arab countries to this peaceful approach which is in consonance with international legality.

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

Despite all these Arab and Palestinian initiatives, the Israeli position remained intransigent and characterized by a categorical refusal to deal with any of them. Israel categorically refuses to recognize the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination and to establish their independent State.

Thanks to the continuous improvement in the international political climate and the commendable efforts of the Secretary-General, our Organization was able to play fully its role in the settlement of various regional conflicts which plagued the world over the past decades. We have great hopes that the United Nations will be able to play its role concerning the Palestinian question and force Israel to implement the various international resolutions concerning the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and respect for international instruments and resolutions on the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories, including the holy city of Al-Quds.

The long-awaited atmosphere of détente which now prevails is an opportunity for our Organization to work for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in order to reach a durable, just and comprehensive settlement to the Middle East problem on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The core of the conflict in the Middle East region is the question of Palestine. That region is now in the grip of one of the most serious and complex crises. The persistence of Israel in occupying the Palestinian territories and in denying the Palestinian people their legitimate rights are time bombs which

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threaten international peace. Therefore, Morocco believes that it is necessary that sincere and concerted efforts should be made at this critical juncture to spare the region the scourge of this destructive explosion and enable its peoples to achieve the development to which they have aspired for decades.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Iraq, who wishes to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): In my reply to the representative of the racist Zionist régime, I should state at the outset that he should be the last one to speak of laws and codes of conduct. Iraq has been the cradle of human civilization and is proud that it continues to believe in and work on the basis of the noble great goals that were set by the great forefathers who built the Mesopotamian civilization. Therefore, we reject the Zionist aggression and the usurpation of the land of Palestine. As for the racist Zionist régime, given its record of atrocities and crimes against humanity, it has distorted the noble goals of the Jewish faith and indeed of all other heavenly faiths as well as every human principle and norm of international law.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

Undeterred, that racist régime has continued to reject every peace initiative and United Nations resolution and persisted in a policy of aggression and expansion with impunity, with the support and protection of the United States of America.

The policy pursued by the Zionist régime at this moment, as avowed by the Zionist State at the head of which is Shamir, aims at implementing a dangerous scheme to settle hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants in the occupied lands by suppressing the valiant Palestinian intifadah and expelling the remaining Palestinians from their land. This will eventually lead, according to their design, to the liquidation of the question of Palestine, once and for all.

The immigration of those Jews is part of a carefully designed scheme of the world Zionist movement and is fully supported by the United States of America. Iraq's position has been clear in rejecting this conspiracy, which, if implemented would pose the gravest threat to peace and security in the region, and indeed in the entire world. It would undermine any chance for peace. Thus Iraq has become a target of Zionist imperialist plots and conspiracies, which have taken shape in the current aggression against Iraq to undermine its economic and military power so as to serve the interests of the Zionist régime and enable it eventually to dominate the Arab world and plunder its natural resources. There is therefore an organic link between all the problems of our region. This is a fact that no one can ignore. To ignore it is to ignore the historic, geographic and other realities of the situation which demonstrate that the aim is to perpetuate Zionist occupation, expansion and rejection of peace.

The claims made by the representative of the Zionist régime this morning will not change any of these facts or hide the true face of the Zionist policy of aggression which has been rejected by humanity's conscience. As for the claim of the representative of that entity that it is a small entity in the midst of many Arab countries everyone here knows, that this is an old trick, because Israel

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

possesses nuclear, chemical and biological arms and enjoys the support and protection of the United States of America, which is totally on the side of Israel in a way that is contrary even to the legitimate interests of the American people. Hence, that entity continues to violate all rules of international conduct and human rights.

The road to peace is clear enough. It is the road that would lead to the settlement of all the problems of the region, the principal and fundamental cause of which is the Zionist occupation. Peace should be based on restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, at the forefront of which is the rights to self-determination and to establish its own homeland, the capital of which is the holy city of Al-Quds, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: In view of the large number of names still on the list of speakers for agenda item 23, "The question of Palestine", the schedule of the General Assembly has had to be adjusted to enable it to consider the question of Palestine also in the afternoon of Monday, 3 December. Therefore, on Tuesday morning, 4 December, the Assembly will take up the reports of the First Committee that were originally scheduled for Monday afternoon, and will begin consideration of agenda item 34, "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa", on Tuesday afternoon, 4 December, instead of in the morning as originally scheduled.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.